

## Homily for the Feast of the Trinity.

June 6-7, 2009

Stephen Hawking is one of the best-known scientists alive today. He holds the same university position that Isaac Newton once held. Although he is confined to a wheelchair and must use a computer to communicate with others, his mind is alive and curious about the origins of our universe.

In his book BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME, he tells how he once attended a meeting in the Vatican to discuss the origins of the universe. He says that Pope John Paul II gave them a very nice talk but also told them that they didn't have the right to look into what happened before or at the very moment of creation. Hawking then says that it was just as well the Pope didn't know what they had been discussing before he addressed them. Hawking goes on to say that very soon scientists will know so much about the origins of the world that they will know the mind of God!

For all his intelligence, Hawking missed the point. How could a man who is so bright, who in fact is a genius, so badly miss the point. The Holy Father's point is that one should know God first, and then they will understand the purpose and the nature of all that he has created. It does not work the other way around. You can't hope to know the mind of God without first knowing what God has revealed about himself.

We can know God, his purpose in creating the universe, his intentions toward us, his intimate desires and his will. God wants us to know him. He takes pains to let

us know what he's like and who he is, and what he wants of us. The most powerful source of that knowledge is right here in this Eucharist. It is not just a nice ceremony that some good and holy people made up. It is a part of God's intention.

A Priest friend told me about an encounter he had in the Atlanta airport. He met a young woman who began to talk to him when she found out he was a priest. He spoke to her about the Church and its Sacraments. She said that she thought ritual was nice, but it wasn't for her. He replied by saying, "Sally, ritual would be nice if it was just something that people made up, but the ritual of the Church was given to us by God. The rituals **are** for you. God intends them for you so that you will know him more clearly."

I always take the time to ask our 8<sup>th</sup> graders and those preparing for Confirmation "What is the Trinity?" I am sorry to say that many of them didn't have a clue. I know that this was discussed in classes, because our teachers and Catechists and I, myself, discussed it with them. Why didn't they know? I think it was because they were more comfortable creating a God that was formed in their image and likeness. But to do that is superstition. That is not Truth.

One of the most frustrating experiences is being misjudged by others, or having another person hold false impressions about our motivations and character. But it is common for us to do this same thing with God.

Often, when a person tells me their understanding of God, it turns out to be a description of themselves. Perhaps this image is just a little brighter and just a little wiser than

they are but they have formed God in their image and likeness. It is said that God created man in His own image and likeness, and man has been trying to return the favor ever since.

This feast of the Trinity is celebrated every year to remind us that God reveals himself fully to us. He does not need **us** to re-create him. He has a character and a personality and a will. He willingly and gladly opens himself to us. He does not hold anything back. And he desires for us to know the truth about who he is and what his intentions are. Intelligence needs to be balanced by wisdom to really know what truth is.

This feast day reveals God as a community of pure love. The Father loves the Son and the power of their love is so strong that it goes forth seeking to be shared. This is the Holy Spirit. God, the Trinity of love, seeks others to share the bond of love.

That is the reason we were created and set upon this earth. Our purpose is to know God, and to enter into the deepest relationship of love with him. The human soul was created to have its fulfillment in God alone. Anything less than that is incompleteness, and falls short of the truth. That's what sin is, falling short of the truth about ourselves about our relationship with others and with God.

What does the Trinity reveal about God? He makes himself known to us as a loving Father who is the source of all life. As Father he is creator and designer of all that exists.

But since he is also the author of Love, he desired us to know him on a personal and touchable level that is why he revealed himself as the Son. As God the Son, he entered

our history and walked among us, and embraced the fullest range of human emotion, including suffering and joy. His coming as man was his proof that he stands beside us, and understands first hand every frustration, joy, sadness and triumph of human living. The Son revealed a loving Father, who wants to forgive again and again. The Son revealed the purpose and the goal of human life through his teaching.

And finally God revealed himself as the spirit who is his continuing presence in the world. Through the Spirit God continues to live among us, guiding, teaching, and forgiving. The work of the Spirit is to put signposts across our paths again and again and markers that point our attention to the truth. The life of the Church is the tool that the Holy Spirit uses to invite us to know God more intimately bring us to deeper communion and continuing communication.

I think Stephen Hawking is a Genius. But intelligence must be balanced with wisdom. Wisdom cannot be acquired unless we are first willing to know God for who he is. We don't have to re-invent God. He already exists. He has done all the work for us. It is here right under our noses. He has made known to us the most important and valuable secret of the universe; that he is a trinity of persons, bonded in a communion of Love. God created us to be a part of that community of Love. We cannot know God unless we know him as a Trinity of persons. And we can never know ourselves and never have any real understanding of the universe unless we have intimate knowledge of the Trinity.